

many as six mymarids, in others two, three and four. The last that emerged were invariably of smaller stature and failed to survive. I watched one *ensifer* after making frantic attempts in search of an oviposit situation, oviposit in an egg already carrying several partially developed mymarids. — GEOFFREY VASSIE, F.R.E.S., 40 Cranleigh Gardens, Southbourne, Bournemouth, Dorset.

A YEAR TO REMEMBER FOR SUGARING ENTHUSIASTS. —

The mid-summer of 1982 was notable for a prolific number of humid, thundery nights without the honeydew which often makes sugaring futile. Rumours of the Heart Moth (*Dicycla oo* L.) being common in Ashted Common, Surrey made me decide to try its old haunts at Ruislip Woods, Middlesex, as it had not been found commonly there for a long time.

The night of 13th July followed a sultry breathless day with dim reverberating rumbling of thunder from all about, but no special direction. A fine line of about 40 perimeter oaks to Copse Wood were duly sugared 15 minutes before dusk. The concoction was from a pound each of black treacle and sand sugar with ½ pint water to dilute and laced with stale beer. Even as the nectar was laid out, noctuae started to buzz expectantly round the treat.

Maybe I was too late in the evening or in the year, but either way no *D. oo* graced my sugar. However I was startled to see a large, oval, seething pale ring of noctuae shoulder to shoulder to get at the sugar, with the weaker non-footballers barged to the ground below, where they soon discovered drops that had run off the trunk. 143 individuals were counted on one patch and 131 on another, the majority being Dunbar (*Cosmia trapezina* L.) with four of the blackish ab. *nigra* form. The wine-red and light ochreous speckled forms of the Suspected (*Parastichtis suspecta* Hbn.) were welcome as were the following:— (approximations) 3,500 Dunbar, 200 each of Copper Underwing (*Amphipyra* sp.), Dark Arches (*Apamea monoglypha* Hufnagel) and Large Yellow Underwing (*Noctua promuba* L.), 100 Light Arches (*Apamea lithoxylaea* D. & S.), 50 each of Marbled Minor species (*Procus* sp.) and Small Angle Shades (*Euplexia lucipara* L.), 30 Suspected (*P. suspecta*), 20 each of the Bird's wing (*Dypterygia scabriuscula* L.), Double Square-spot (*Amathes triangulum* Hufnagel) and Smoky Wainscot (*Mythimna impura* Hbn.), 10 Old Lady (*Mormo maura* L.) and Dingy Shears (*Enargia ypsilon* D. & S.), five Heart and Dart (*Agrotis exclamationis* L.), three Dusky Brocade (*Apamea remissa* Hbn.), two Slender Brindle (*Apamea scolopacina* Esper) and one each of Shoulder-striped Wainscot (*Mythimna comma* L.), Grey Arches (*Polia nebulosa* Hufn.) and Double Dart (*Graphiphora augur* Fab.).

I was fortunate to take two *oo* at sugar in Surrey and, on 16th July, in half an hour, eleven Light Crimson Underwing (*Catocala promissa* D. & S.) came to sugar in a well known locality, mainly in mint condition. A fortnight later on a night of few moths, a

Dark Crimson Underwing (*Catocala sponsa* L.) was taken by someone else. A year to remember for sugaring enthusiasts. — M. R. BRITTON, 67 Bramley Garth, Appletree Village, York YO3 0NQ.

THE EMPEROR MOTH: *SATURNIA PAVONIA* L. IN EPPING FOREST, ESSEX. — It would seem worthy of placing on record the occurrence of *Saturnia pavonia* in Wanstead Park, the southernmost portion of Epping Forest, during 1984. Two males were very quickly assembled there at about 4.00 p.m. on 22nd April using a female reared from ova obtained in Berkshire in 1983. This would appear to be only the second record of *pavonia* in Epping Forest since 1903: the first being a gravid female taken at the Epping Forest Conservation Centre light trap on 8th May, 1981 (*vide Ent. Rec.* 93:158). Wanstead Park has been fairly thoroughly surveyed for Lepidoptera for over five years, and in that time I have never seen adult emperors, nor found any of the earlier stages, and there is consequently some doubt as to whether or not the species has persisted undetected here.

In Essex as a whole the species is fairly widespread, although in this south-western corner it is apparently not numerous. A single larva was brought to me for identification during 1981 by a workman clearing brambles (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) from a ditch at Redbridge, some four kilometres to the north east, whilst slightly further afield it occurs sparingly at Hainault Forest.

Recent changes in the management of Wanstead Park by the Conservation of Epping Forest have included much felling of sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and dead elms (*Ulmus* sp.) and this has resulted in a tremendous spread of brambles to cover large areas in dense, impenetrable patches. Possibly the species has indeed persisted here at low level and is now taking advantage of the increase in one of its principal foodplants in this region. I would certainly urge Essex Lepidopterists to try assembling this species elsewhere in Epping Forest during 1985. — C. W. PLANT, Assistant Curator (Natural Sciences, Biology), Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, E15 4LZ.

REMARKABLE ABUNDANCE OF *QUERCUSIA QUERCUS* L.: PURPLE HAIRSTREAK IN 1983. — I am surprised nobody else has commented on this fact and begin to wonder if my experiences are shared by others. During one excursion on August 3, *Q. quercus* appeared to be present every time I stopped the car in East Kent, always in the vicinity of tall isolated oaks. The first occasion was in East Blean Wood, where parts had been felled leaving the oaks untouched. The first oak tree revealed half a dozen butterflies, the second had perhaps a dozen flying round the top and occasionally coming down to settle on the road surface. As I stood and looked around, I was able to see that all the distant oaks were swarming with *quercus*. A little further on I stopped the car in Owls Hatch Lane, to the north of Thornden Wood. Within a minute, several